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S-Series Belt Tensioner Replacement

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09-21-2003, 10:36 PM

#1

wolfman

Super Member

★★★★★



Join Date: Jun 2002

Location: Texas

Posts: 12,066

[wolfman's Photos](#)

S-Series Belt Tensioner Replacement

Saturn "S " series serpentine belt tensioner replacement. This procedure is identical for ALL years 91'-02' DOHC and SOHC engine equipped Saturns.

You will need:

Set of metric wrenches and sockets with extensions (6 point variety HIGHLY RECOMMENDED)

Set of jackstands and a good jack (can be done without but is MUCH easier with)

Old toothbrush and perhaps some spray cleaner

New tensioner from your choice of source

Proceed as follows:

Jack up the passenger side or entire front of the car and support it on jackstands DO NOT get under a car supported by a jack alone!

Remove the passenger side wheel and inner splashguard to gain better access and light to the tensioner

Place a wrench on the center bolt of the tensioner pulley and turn it as if you are trying to TIGHTEN it to relieve the tension on the belt, hold it there, and slip the belt off 1 of the pulleys. Then release the tensioner and remove the belt.

Now turn the center tensioner bolt the opposite way and remove the tensioner pulley from the tensioner, this will allow you better access and line of sight to the two tensioner bolts.

Use your old toothbrush to clean the accumulated crud off the upper and lower tensioner to engine bolts to ENSURE your socket will go on SQUARELY and get a good grab on the entire bolt head of each one.

Remove the upper and lower tensioner to engine bolts. These can be on quite tight after years of use. WORK CAREFULLY, use a variety of extensions etc...until you find one combination that will allow you to turn the bolts SQUARELY with the socket! If you round one off, removal is nearly impossible, so TAKE YOUR TIME!

Remove the tensioner

Install the new tensioner and tighten the bolts to around 20 Ft pds. DO NOT OVERTIGHTEN!

Install the pulley on the new tensioner AFTER you install it, UNLESS it came with a new pulley, then install it as is from the package.

Clean ALL the pulleys with some spray cleaner and a tooth brush and paper towels or rags

Reinstall the belt, routing diagram is located on the radiator support

Reinstall the splashguard and wheel and lower the car.

NOTES: I cannot stress enough how important it is to use caution when removing the tensioner to engine bolts so that you do not round them off! CLEAN the bolt heads FIRST!

If when you install the belt and release the tensioner, it is not TIGHT, you have done something wrong, remove the belt and recheck the diagram.

As stated this can be done without jacking up the car BUT, it is MUCH easier to do through the wheel well with the extra light. Removing the tensioner pulley gives you decent access to the upper bolt without having to remove the upper engine mount and jacking up/supporting the engine.

...

Old Saturns never die, people KILL them, so check your damn oil!

"Unthinking respect for authority is the greatest enemy of truth." Albert Einstein

REWARD EXCELLENCE!



Rate the quality of this post and help *wolfman* reputation points. Click the reputation button near the bottom left corner of this message box. Thank you!



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08-10-2004, 10:45 AM

#2

[jasonpopnc](#)
Member
Join Date: Feb 2004
Location: Durham, NC
Posts: 205


FYI-
I did this on a 99SL1.
To remove the upper mounting bolt, I had to first remove a bolt from the upper engine mount-to frame bolt (10mm).
Without doing it, I began to remove the upper tensioner mount bolt and did not have enough room to get the socket and wrench out!

REWARD EXCELLENCE!
 Rate the quality of this post and help *jasonpopnc* reputation points. Click the reputation button near the bottom left corner of this message box. Thank you!



08-11-2004, 12:19 AM

#3

[bbarbulo](#)
Advanced Member
Join Date: Nov 2002
Location: Canada
Posts: 815


I just replaced the bearing inside the tensioner pulley, and I replaced the idler pulley altogether. no more high pitched squeal in the morning 😊

REWARD EXCELLENCE!
 Rate the quality of this post and help *bbarbulo* reputation points. Click the reputation button near the bottom left corner of this message box. Thank you!



08-12-2004, 07:57 AM

#4

[Meridian](#)
Member
Join Date: Oct 2002
Location: GA
Posts: 65


Couple of questions:

Have any of you seen where the tensioner pulley has come lose. When I look at the pulley it does a slight in/out motion, nothing real bad, but you can hear it moving in/out. Saturn says that the pulley needs to be replaced, and the belt as well. Saturn will charge over 300, while NAPA is 236. Is that to much? And, does anyone know someone in the GA area that does this type of work. NAPA gives a 1yr/12k mile warranty on the tensioner.

Thanks

REWARD EXCELLENCE!
 Rate the quality of this post and help *Meridian* reputation points. Click the reputation button near the bottom left corner of this message box. Thank you!



08-12-2004, 07:59 AM

#5

[Meridian](#)
Member
Join Date: Oct 2002
Location: GA
Posts: 65


Also, it is a 2001 Saturn SL1 w/50k miles. Is that normal for something like that to go out that quickly?

REWARD EXCELLENCE!
 Rate the quality of this post and help *Meridian* reputation points. Click the reputation button near the bottom left corner of this message box. Thank you!



08-13-2004, 10:40 AM

#6

[jasonpopnc](#)
Member
Join Date: Feb 2004
Location: Durham, NC
Posts: 205


Quote:
Originally posted by Meridian
Couple of questions:

Have any of you seen where the tensioner pulley has come lose. When I look at the pulley it does a slight in/out motion, nothing real bad, but you can hear it moving in/out. Saturn says that the pulley needs to be replaced, and the belt as well. Saturn will charge over 300, while NAPA is 236. Is that to much? And, does anyone know someone in the GA area that does this type of work. NAPA gives a 1yr/12k mile warranty on the tensioner.

Thanks



You can get an aftermarket tensioner assy for 65.00 at autozone. The belt runs 20-25. Find someone you know and offer them a case of beer (or Pepsi) to do the work. Save yourself \$200+!

REWARD EXCELLENCE!
 Rate the quality of this post and help *jasonpopnc* reputation points. Click the reputation button near the bottom left corner of this message box. Thank you!

02-10-2005, 12:41 AM

#7

[94sc2boy](#)
Member

Join Date: Sep 2000
Location: Morro Bay, CA
Posts: 482
[94sc2boy's Photos](#) 
1994 SC2



 **Re: S-Series Belt Tensioner Replacement**

Here is the picture of the new dayco. Its a little bigger and its got a plastic pulley on it. This cost 95 dollars at autozone. I think you might want to look for a different brand or pay less(65 on the internet) We'll have to see if it lasts as long as the original. I don't like that its a 15mm instead of the old 14.

<http://www.saturnfans.com/photos/sho...sort/1/cat/650>

REWARD EXCELLENCE!
 Rate the quality of this post and help *94sc2boy* reputation points. Click the reputation button near the bottom left corner of this message box. Thank you!

06-06-2005, 04:03 PM

#8

[drumr](#)
Member


Join Date: Aug 2004
Location: Albuquerque, NM
Posts: 61
[drumr's Photos](#) 



 **Re: S-Series Belt Tensioner Replacement**

<FYI>

If in your haste to remove bolts, you neglect to clean them first (especially the 10mm's!!) and DO end up rounding them, I highly recomment the Sears Bolt Out Set. You have to get the 13 piece set to get the piece for 10mm bolts (\$49.99), but if you've ever rounded one, it's WELL worth that money! I have some experience with this, and have actually only used the 1 piece from the kit (for the 10mm bolts)...but well worth it!

<http://www.sears.com/sr/javasr/produ...+Taps+%26+Dies>

I can't stress enough heeding Wolfman's advice regarding cleaning bolts and getting PROPERLY fitting sockets...that will save much headache! Good to know, though, that there's a tool that works for rounded bolts. My 2 cents.

-Drumr-

REWARD EXCELLENCE!
 Rate the quality of this post and help *drumr* reputation points. Click the reputation button near the bottom left corner of this message box. Thank you!

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